

A SONG FOR NIGEL

“I still remember when,” the voice complained
(We looked down upon a darkling plain)
“The land here was all fields, you know.”
Hark! Thus the familiar fable goes.

For where the ancient ploughman once toiled,
Where the oxen's yoke worked hallowed soil
Comes the conveyancer with furrowed brow
And commands his men to speed the plough!

And now the cathedrals in their gothic glory
Are bullied by vulgar multi-storeys
And along the path where pilgrims trod
Hurries the foul bricklayer, carrying hod.

Shall he that live this day, and see old age
Not then be afflicted with a quiet rage
To see where sceptred kings once reigned
Sing this rancorous song of shame?

Despairing of England's profligacy then
If I should die, think only this of me:
That graveyard where jewelled cobwebs collect
Will next year sprout a Sports Direct